

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
98 JUL -7 PM 12:45  
DOCKET SECTION

July 2, 1997

Docket Clerk  
US DOT Dockets Room PL 401  
400 Seventh Street SW  
Washington, D. C. 20590-0001

Gentlemen:

The Attorney General of Missouri has notified me that your office is seeking public comments about the household moving industry.

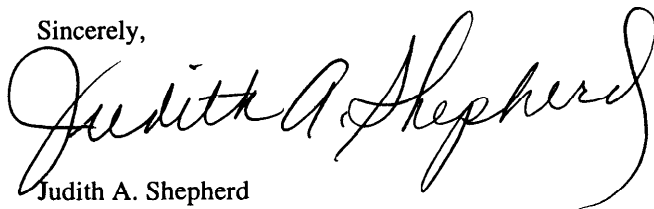
I am enclosing copies of documents of my disastrous move with United Van Lines in January 1997. This move was job related because of a relocation. . . I am an employee of the US Department of Agriculture, my employer chose the van line. This move was a disaster from beginning to end....and as far as I am concerned it is not resolved as of yet.

I will be provide any type of assistance to this cause...I have had many long distance moves in the past 30 years and nothing would have prepared me for the move United Van Lines provided and such an unprofessional staff and bad attitude.

I may be reached during the week at 314/206-2095....my home phone is 314/894-3976.  
My home address is :

1209-7 Covington Manor Lane  
St. Louis, Missouri 63125

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith A. Shepherd". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Judith A. Shepherd



**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI**

JEFFERSON CITY

65102

JAY NIXON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

P.O.Box 899  
(573) 751-3321

September 22, 1997

Judith Shepherd  
1209-7 Covington Manor Ln  
St. Louis, MO 63125

Re: Complaint No. CF-97-12537  
United Van Lines, Inc.

Dear Ms. Shepherd:

Enclosed is a copy of the correspondence this office received from the above-mentioned company concerning your consumer report. I would appreciate receiving any comments you may have concerning the company's response.

Please complete and return the enclosed complaint satisfaction form in order that we may determine the status of your complaint. In the event that your complaint remains unresolved, please complete and return the form with your comments and any additional information or documentation supporting your position. We will review this information to determine if further action is warranted.

If we do not receive the complaint satisfactory form or any other correspondence from you, we will close the file based on the company's response to your complaint. Thank you for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON  
Attorney General

Terry L. Ball  
Complaint Unit Manager

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Amy K. Duemmel", is written over the typed name.

Amy K. Duemmel  
Investigator  
Consumer Protection Division  
573-751-4471

Enclosures

United Van Lines, Inc.  
One United Drive  
Fenton, Missouri 63026  
(314) 326-3100



September 12, 1997

RECEIVED  
SEP 15 1997  
MISSOURI  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Amy K. Duemmel  
Consumer Protection Division  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
P.O. Box 899  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Re: Complaint No. CF-97-12537  
Judith A. Shepherd  
United Van Lines, Inc. Order #302-6001-7

Dear Ms. Duemmel:

This letter is in response to the above referenced complaint of Judith A. Shepherd.

The shipment which is the subject of Ms. Shepherd's complaint is WL Order # 302-6001-7. This is a government bill of lading in which the U.S. Department of Agriculture contracted with United Van Lines, Inc. to move this shipment in interstate commerce between New York and Missouri.

According to the terms of the U.S. General Service Administration's Tender of Service, any government employee, such as Ms. Shepherd must make her claims according to certain procedures. These procedures provide that Ms. Shepherd must make her claim through the Government Bill of Lading Officer with the Department of Agriculture. This officer will take up the matter with the carrier.

Therefore, although my investigation of this matter reveals that the complaints of Ms. Shepherd are without substance. Nevertheless, any disputes must be settled between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and United Van Lines, Inc.

Amy K. Duemmel  
September 12, 1997  
Page 2.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to this complaint. If you need anything further, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Rabbitt". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "R" and a cursive script.

Richard J. Rabbitt  
Legal Administrator

January 6, 1997

**8:00 am Driver** called to say they were 15 minutes from my house and needed directions. I gave directions **from** Exit 12, **Buffalo** Street, Willow Street, Willard Street to Vega Street.

**10:30 am** Moving van arrives. After a quick walk through with the crew they all started complaining about how **small/and** full the rooms were. The driver demanded to know if **it was a** telephone estimated move. I told him no, Fenton James of J.H. Bennett Moving in Erie, Pennsylvania made a personal visit and was shown all closets, cabinets, cellar and a storage shed in a back yard. They also told him about a 15 x 10 storage unit elsewhere.

The **driver** complained about being cold all day long. Two other crew members played my radios very loudly. The driver complained about my dog that was asleep in a chair.

**3:30 p. m** The driver asked me to take him to the bank because he needed money. I took him to Fleet Bank in Falconer. The bank was closed. He went next door to Sugar Creek Store because they had a Western Union there. They would not cash his check. I then took him to Motel 6. They would not cash his check. Then, I took him to Quality Market in Falconer. They would not cash his check. I then drove him to Comfort Inn on Route 60. They would not cash his check either. Then we returned to my house.

All that day I was trying to call utilities here for disconnections and in St. Louis for connections for my apartment. Every time I needed to use my phone the driver was on the phone.

That day I offered the crew Dr. Pepper. They all said no. On day one, the three crew members **were very** polite and cooperative. The one who packed the dishes in the kitchen was very good at his job. Michelle from Armstrong Relocation called and I told her it wasn't a good day.

January 7, 1996

Crew **arrived** around **9:30** a.m. and promptly blocked the neighbor's driveway while neighbor was asking the driver to back up a few feet so he could get out. Driver insisted he could not move, but would if he was actually leaving. The day before, they did not block his driveway.

As soon as crew arrived, all started complaining. Driver complained, etc . . . size of the house, too many contents, sidewalk slick and etc.. . . . !!! Michelle **from** Armstrong called again. She insisted I must get out of the house. I had bags and boxes for Salvation Army . . . One crew member started picking through the bags, asked for a black suitcase and a black garment bag.

**When the crew moved to the cellar where I had a metal bookcase that I wanted to take with me, two** crew members insisted it had "dry rot". **It is rusted** at the bottom. This is not dry rot..

Page Two

I had magazines I wanted packed. Crew member complained that these magazines also had **dry** rot and started throwing things off the shelf insisting that **everything** had dry rot. (Trashed my cellar). I finally told him to pack what he wanted and **left** for the Salvation **Army**.

That **afternoon** I **returned** to **find** that my dog had been tied to the dining room table. My dog had **not even barked at any** of the moving crew or bothered them.

**By then**, the packers had moved **upstairs** to large hall closet. I was told that the boxes of magazines which were there also had dry rot. They are very heavy, but if put on a two wheel hand cart, instead of being tied by one hand, the boxes would not rip apart.

At **11 a.m** I **called my co-worker in St. Louis** and asked **her to have Joe Williams, Relocation Specialist** call me.

I had shown <sup>with</sup> the woman packer all my personal belongings on my bed and in the corner of my room that I wanted **left** alone, including my son's bassoon. This instrument can crack and would be destroyed **if it** got cold. Upon checking my bedroom **later**, I found that the instrument was gone. I told them I had to **have** the bassoon off the truck now. They totally ignored me saying that it was too far back in the truck to remove. I then called my attorney, Tom Flowers.

**3:50 p.m.** Joe **Williams** returned my phone call, but I was out of the house. Who ever answered the phone knew the call had something to do with the move. Joe said he would call back in 20 minutes (about **4:10 p.m.**) The **crew** sudden@ got **very busy**. They loaded seven chairs and all the boxes from the dining room. Joe Williams never called back. The crew **left** about **4:25 p.m.** I then called Joe Williams and told him about my various problems.

One additional headache. One of the crew members wanted to buy my 25 inch Sylvania TV set for 25 dollars. I said no. He then upped it to 35 dollars. I said no. He **left** and returned about a half hour later. He wanted me to sell the TV after I had already said no twice.

**My son's upstairs bedroom** had nothing to be moved except one chair. I had all the belongings on one side of the room. The room now looks like it has been trashed. Clothes are scattered everywhere. They taped a cardboard box to the door opening. When removed it will tear the wallpaper.

I found boxes in the cellar which they had packed. These boxes contained many assorted items, none of which were wrapped in packing paper. **In the box were items such as dishes, electric drill, paint brushes, screwdrivers, and kitchen items.**

My **refrigerator** contained one can of Miller beer before the crew **arrived**. When I carried out my trash, I saw a shiny metal can in the snow. It was a Miller beer can. **On** immediate check of my **refrigerator**, there was no beer to be found. While I was out running errands, they called for pizza. They then helped themselves to all eight cans of my Dr. Pepper.

### Page Three

January 8, 1997

**9:30 a. m**     **The moving van arrived and the driver parked the van in the** middle of the street, deliberately blocking **traffic** and my neighbor's driveway. My neighbor returned home. The driver, once again would not move the van for him. My neighbor then called the police department. The driver called Michelle, the Customer Service Representative. She then wanted my neighbor's phone number. I did not provide this information. This was supposed to be my move and should not have **involved** my neighbors. (The first day the moving van was headed in the opposite direction and did not block street or neighbor's drive.) The police came about a half hour later. The driver was extremely cordial to the officer and cheerfully moved the van. The two of them "chatted" for **fifteen** minutes or so in my neighbor's formerly blocked driveway. They shook hands and laughed loudly as they parted company.

My **dining room table** is a double **pedestal** base with an 84 inch **scallop** edged top. The top was bolted to the double pedestal. The top was carefully covered and taped. Then, somehow, the driver managed for this top to be loosened and it then did a somersault in the middle of my dining room while I was standing in the doorway watching. He claimed he did not know the bolts had been **loosened from the pedestal. This incident happened less than a half hour after the incident with the police officer.**

The driver and one of the crew members didn't seem to know that packing means using those large bundles of paper lying on the living room floor. Breakables from my dining room were put in the box without being wrapped in paper. I personally wrapped and packed three items that were breakable. The driver said he was going to wrap them (when??) They were already in the box and the box was full. He only seemed to use packing paper if I was in the general vicinity.

The crew **complained** about lack of boxes on Monday. That night I counted 168 of their boxes. They **deliberately tore** up boxes which I had packed. They refused to pack items in their original boxes such as my electric heater, etc.

This **crew** including Michelle, simply did not take me (the customer) seriously, nor did they treat me with any respect. To the packing crew I was a "dumb woman who knew nothing". To Michelle I was a 'hysterical old broad". Only after I contacted Joe Williams did anyone take me seriously when I had **anything** to say. The packing crew and driver never really heard any thing or comprehended any thing that was said to them the first twenty times or so. My adult son was with me on Wednesday. I told the crew what I wanted packed, moved, etc. They would do nothing. A few minutes later they asked my son what should be done. My son said "Follow my mother's instructions", which he then had to repeat again and again and again.

This group had many tours of my house and were told a minimum of 25 times:

1. Don't pack the first room upstairs. Nothing is going.
2. **Every thing in the master bedroom and both closets go to the apartment.**
3. Dishwasher and freezer go to storage.
4. Stove, refrigerator, washer and dryer all stay.

Page Four

I have previously had eight long distance moves, seven of which were done by North American Van **Lines**. All moves combined did not add up to the grief and stress I went through on January 6, 1997 alone.

I **asked Michelle** for a United Van Line representative to come to the house. I thought a rep. might get this crew motivated to do the job they were being paid for. Michelle didn't think this was **necessary**. I left my house on January 8, 1997 and **left** my son to oversee the move. Apparently, by then, Joe **Williams** had contacted someone at the corporate headquarters. After a long talk between my son and Michelle, the whole moving process began to speed up and became less of a tug of war. The **crew** was **suddenly** willing to do the right thing. By that time they were out of boxes and my son and I were out of patience. This group has literally trashed my home and my possessions. No one seems to be **thinking** of me (the customer). This is my move, these are my possessions and this is my home. They were supposed to dismantle and pack, instead they trashed and tore apart.

Judith A. Shepherd



**PAGE FIVE**

**MOVING-----continued**

On January 8, 1997 once the movers considered themselves finished, I was never ask to sign I am a nine year Federal employee who was the CUSTOMER in this matter and was the one being moved. My wants, wishes, request have been totally ignored from day one. Everything had to meet the drivers demands!!! This man was rude, arrogant, mouthy, careless and lazy!!! If he took as good care of my possessions as he did the inside the moving van and his quilted pads I anything. My son Scott was ask to sign that the storage unit was not emptied. I NEVER signed any paper work in Jamestown, NY after the truck was loaded. On January 13, 1997 at 7:30 PM after everything had been unloaded the driver ask me to sign the paperwork for POINT OF ORIGIN. I refused. He did not give me the paper work for the DESTINATION to sign..... he gave them to my adult son that was here from Dallas. When I refused to sign , the driver then ask my son to sign for Point of Origin..... he too refused. I was not given ANY paper work for this move.

On January 6, 1997 the began insisting he was going to unload me on Sunday, January 12, 1997 even though the delivery date worked out with customer service was Monday 13, 1997. This was the only concession the drive made to me. I HAVE NEVER BEEN ASK IN ALL MY PREVIOUS MOVES TO HAVE A SUNDAY DELIVERY DATE FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE DRIVER!!!

**JANUARY 13, 1997**

The driver arrive a the public storage unit on S. Lemay Ferry Road. Even though there was ample room to use a ramp off the van. His preference was to "drop" my possessions off the side of the van. According to him it was QUICKER. So I got to watch my Grandmothers couch, freezer, dishwasher, dinning room furniture, buffet, and many, many other possession DROPPED off the side of the van!!!!!!!!!! (A 15 X 32 Storage Unit) The temperature was 8 degrees.

A representative from a local United Van Line Agency , Gary Perino showed up and observed the move. . . .never said anything about Driver dropping everything off this side of the van. Mr. Perino said he would be back in the afternoon at the apartment. HE NEVER RETURNED. A call to Michelle at Customer Service, she informed my son the Mr. Perino was busy, he had six appointments for the day. If Mr. Perino had no intentions of coming to my apartment, why did he lie to me.

Once the moving van arrived at my apartment on Covington Manor Lane, St. Louis the driver promptly put out a ramp!! About two hours after arrival at the apartment the driver carried in a box or two, which was rare for him. He then started in on a verbal tirade about moving items twice. HE WAS NEVER ASK TO MOVE ANYTHING TWICE. He gave my son and I a ten minute speech on moving items twice. At that point my son told the drive to put down the X!#!&@ box in the living room we would move the items where we wanted them.

I ask about United Van Lines picking up empty boxes in a few days .....this too started an long unasked for speech about how United would only come to my apartment once to pick up boxes, that they would not come back time and time again.....etc.

I am still in a state of shock at the rudeness of the crew, the fact I had a Customer Service Representative name Michelle Hughey who was of NO HELP WHAT SO EVER!!! I have found all call I made to her never resolved anything. All I ever got was the "All Moves Are Stressful" speech, while the crew was trashing my house.

**FEBRUARY 5, 1997** Called United Consumer Line 314/343-3900 spoke with Phyllis concerning my move. She stated she would send me a form to fill out about Consumer Satisfaction and I could write up my complaints. She suggested I could attach the pictures I had made of the damages and the poor packing job the crew did.

**February 11, 1997** Called Phyllis at the United Consumer Line about the form I had not received. Phyllis informed me that the form came from "some place else", that she personally did not send the form out. . . . .It would take 3 to 4 weeks for the form to arrive. That is not what Phyllis had told me the week before. On this date Phyllis was belligerent and told me "THE MOVE IS OVER" what do you want us to do about it?

**February 12, 1997** called the Better Business Bureau. . . .person taking complaint, did not seem to want to know any details of my complaint, the phone call lasted less than five minutes.

Called Federal Highway Administration transferred many times, no one ever answered a phone in the section I called, nor did any number have VOICE MAIL.

**February 25, 1997** called Senator Christopher Bond's office.....was told to hire a lawyer

**February 27, 1997** Becky from DLOS travel section called NFC, the bill was already paid , nothing they could do.

**March 12, 1997** Received form from Better Business Bureau. . . . . most of the facts pertaining to this matter were incorrect on the reporting form. Returned the form and wrote a letter explaining my move. Never heard from them again.

**May 1, 1997** Discussed my situation of the move with Nancy Palmer in Human Resources....she has attempted many calls since this time on my behalf. No one at United Van Lines has ever returned one of her phone calls. (I gave MS Palmer copies of all my documentation)

**June 4, 1997** Received a telephone message that Craig Dodge Restoration would like to schedule an appointment with me to look at the damages done to my furniture during the move. Appointment was scheduled for June 6, 1997 at 1:00 PM.

**June 6, 1997** Representative from Craig Dodge Restorations arrived promptly at 1:00 PM and reviewed my damages.

**June 6, 1997** Called my former Congressman Amory Houghton at 716/484-0252 and was give Attorney General of Missouri Jay Nixon name and his phone number of 800-392-8222. Called number and spoke with gentlement who said he would send me a complaint form.

**June 9, 1997** Received complaint form from Attoorney General Jay Nixon

**June 16, 1997** I have tried many many times in the past six months to reach Linda Marie Mitchler at the Office of Motor Carriers in Washington DC at 202/358-7063. She has never been there and her Voice Mail is usually full. I have tried 202/358-2027 which is a co-worker but no one has ever answered this phone, nor was there Voice Mail.